

THE CUTTING EDGE

Race and VR Service: A Perspective

by Albert Jones, Civil Rights Officer

The rehabilitation rate for Blacks, 64.8%, and Hispanics, 63.9%, was slightly lower than Whites, 70.0%. These findings contrast significantly from those of Wilson, as reported in the Boston Globe article.

As of July 1, 2001, the Commission employed 333 persons in Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor job titles in its network of 28 service offices throughout the Commonwealth; 9% (or 30) of those in counselor titles were Black; 5.1% (or 17) were Hispanic; and, 3% (or 10) were Asian. In Massachusetts, 83% of those in VR Counselor titles were White compared to the national average of 93%. Individuals in VR Counselor titles from other ethnic backgrounds far exceed the statewide parities of 2.9% for Blacks, 2% for Hispanics and 2.9% for Asians.

In another perspective, thirty-two managers oversee the network of 27 service delivery offices. Of these managers, 9% (or 3) are Black, 3.2% (or 1) is Hispanic and 3.2% (or 1) is Asian. These percentages are above the statewide parities for administrators and managers of 2.9%, 1.6% and 1.7% respectively.

Compared to Wilson's national findings, the Commission's higher representation of ethnic groups in all levels of positions suggests the MRC is increasingly moving toward a successful model of managing diversity both as an employer and as a provider of broad spectrum rehabilitation services.

